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Central Kentucky News-Journal

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Archives

Local farmer gets state award

By [Calen McKinney](#), Staff Writer

Jeff Deener says it's a business first, but it's also a way of life.

The Deener family farm began in 1904, he said, and it's been in his family for three generations.

"I hope to pass it on," he said. "My son-in-law is still in it. There's plenty of work to go around."

Deener's 900-acre farm operation includes dairy and beef cattle, tobacco, corn, soybeans and wheat.

"It keeps us pretty busy," he said. "It's a business [that] we enjoy."

Deener was recognized recently for his work when he was given the Outstanding Conservation Cooperator Award from the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts.

Each year, two Kentucky farmers are recognized for their adoption of conservation practices, according to Steve Coleman, director of the Kentucky Division of Conservation.

The state winner, Coleman said, is given \$500 and a plaque. The runner-up receives \$250 and a plaque. This year's runner-up was Zack Saufley, the owner of Church's Grove Farm in Franklin County, Coleman said.

The winners are chosen by a panel of six judges, Coleman said, based on conservation practices and other criteria. Nominees are submitted from each



photo/[CALEN MCKINNEY](#) Jeff Deener was recently recognized for his farm conservation techniques when he was given the state's Outstanding Conservation Cooperator Award.



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county's conservation district.

Deener said he didn't know much about the award when he was told his farm had been selected.

"I was pleased a farm of our size won," he said. "It's usually large farms in Western Kentucky."

Deener said he practices several conservation techniques, including no-till farming techniques which cut down on erosion.

"Our farm is far from perfect," he said. "Erosion is a constant battle."

Deener has also installed three springs and four watering facilities to give his cattle a constant supply of fresh water. The water in the springs, Deener said, is always cool and doesn't freeze in the winter.

"The main goal was to supply fresher water, good clean water."

The biggest project at the Deener farm, he says, might be the waste pond which holds about 675,000 gallons of waste.

Deener said he can control the nutrients in the pond, which can prevent pollution. About once a year, he said, the pond is pumped and scattered over his fields.

According to Coleman, these are just a few of the reasons Deener was named this year's state award recipient.

Deener said it's nice to be recognized.

"I'm pleased, surprised, gratified," he said. "It's always nice to be recognized by your peers on anything."

Deener says he's received lots of help and farming advice from the employees at the Taylor County Conservation District.

"Taylor County is really blessed with good people," he said. "You don't find that in a lot of counties."

This isn't the first time Deener's farm has received recognition.

Deener and his family received the Taylor County Fair Association's Finest Family Farm Award in 2003. He's also received a Finest Young Tobacco Farmer Award and was named a Master Conservationist.

Deener says he always knew he wanted to be a farmer.

"In the back of my mind, I always knew I wanted to farm," he said. "A farmer just knows."

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